

January 1948

Opinions of former students: no agreement

Has the experiment in education called Black Mountain College been good or bad, useful or useless, successful or unsuccessful? These questions were implied on a blank mailed out to former students last year, and the response was vigorous. Many wrote pages. None agreed. A compilation is planned; excerpts below are only a sampling.

"... most remarkable was the ability of so heterogeneous a group to live well together the lack of privacy produced unfortunate personality problems best feature: the privacy feeling of isolation from the affairs of the nation too acute to satisfy any but the most weary the work program alone more than justifies BMC's existence one of BMC's strongest features is its small size should expand to about twice [present] size [and could] without destroying the original concept disagreements among the faculty as to the function of BMC leave the place in a sort of shifting status remedying what seemed to me the deficiency of shifting aim would probably destroy BMC's chief goodness, freedom to experiment its pedagogical philosophy has [never] experienced true group definition value becomes more and more apparent as time goes on too intense too dilettante outstandingly possible for one to work at his own speed lack of direction saps energy of many students freedom to create lack of basic system experience not related to subject matter; subject matter subordinated to experience sensible dress sartorial slouchiness best possible framework for true democratic living in school situation not yet a democratic community inescapable personal tensions pleasant solitude its freedom, along academic lines, often detrimental to the immature student its freedom 'grew me up.' . . . best feature the freedom of the individual to become his own kind of damned fool"

Question of credits

Another question which brought interesting responses was: "Please outline any experiences you have had in presenting Black Mountain College credits to other institutions . . . Were BMC credits accepted? at face value? conditionally? denied?"

Former students who had experience transferring to other schools reported that, out of approximately thirty-five institutions, five denied a transfer of